



NÁRODNÍ DIVADLO MORAVSKOSLEZSKÉ NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

PRESS RELEASE

OPERA

Ostrava, Czech Republic



The original press release (9 December 2022) edited on 24 January 2024

THE BARTERED BRIDE AT THE NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE

To delight its audiences at Christmas, the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre is opening a new production—the most performed Czech opera by Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884)—**THE BARTERED BRIDE**. The first cast opens on 15 December, and the second one on 17 December 2022, at the Antonín Dvořák Theatre in Ostrava. Marek Šedivý, the music director of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre's opera company, has taken care of the musical direction, while Intendant Jiří Nekvasil is in charge of stage direction. "*The Bartered Bride* holds a special place in the history of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre, as it opened our theatre operation on 12 August 1919. This production marks the 14th staging in our company," recalls Jiří Nekvasil. The opera is Smetana's second finished opera by and will be performed in March and May 2024 within the **Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024**. The production is co-produced with the Slovenian National Theatre Opera and Ballet Ljubljana (opening night in January 2019).

The opera had its world premiere at the Provisional Theatre in Prague in May 1866, and the immediate popularity of the opera exceeded even the author's expectations. The libretto by Karel Sabina (1813–1877) is based on a very simple tale of deception—a ruse that eventually brings together exactly those who love each other, not those whose parents arranged the wedding. Smetana himself was genuinely surprised by the immediate and enduring popularity of his first comic opera. At times, he even regretted that his subsequent operas, which he considered superior from a musical-dramatic point of view, were sidelined. On the other hand, the opera proved the author's ability to compose a national and graceful work.

The Bartered Bride, being appreciated most by domestic audiences, became the Czech national opera. It achieved success at the 1892 Viennese Music and Theatre International Exhibition and gained popularity worldwide.

The nature of the national opera is enhanced by folk motives Smetana reflects in the music. "With one exception, Smetana never directly quotes a folk song in his entire operatic oeuvre. Instead, he masterfully captures the essence of Czechness by infusing the rhythms of traditional Czech dances—polka, furiant, skočná. The opera's 24 numbers form a torrent of unceasing musical invention, a collection so rich that it could suffice for a dozen musicals, particularly the better ones created by today's musical authors. Each musical number *in The Bartered Bride* is a hit, contributing to its enduring popularity. The opera embraces heatricity, playfulness, changeability, movement, colour, humour, poetry, irony, and kindness. These elements serve as the fundamental starting points and hallmarks of our rendition, evident right



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from the overture,” explains the theatre’s intendant and production’s stage director Jiří Nekvasil.

Show dates

1st premiere: 15.12.2022

2nd premiere: 17.12.2022

Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024 show dates: 03.03. and 05.05.2024 from 6:30 pm

Venue

Antonín Dvořák Theatre Smetanovo nám. 3104, 701 04 Moravská Ostrava a Přívoz, Czech Republic

Creative team

conductor **Jiří Habart / Marek Šedivý¹**

stage director **Jiří Nekvasil**

set designer **Daniel Dvořák**

costume designer **Sylva Zimula Hanáková**

choreographer **Lukas Zuschlag**

movement director **Jana Tomsová / Števo Capko**

chorus master **Jurij Galatenko**

dramaturg **Juraj Bajús**

Cast

Krušina **Martin Štolba^{1 2} / Roman Vlkovič**

Ludmila, his wife **Eva Dřízgová-Jirušová¹ / Anna Nitrová²**

Mařenka, daughter **Soňa Godarská / Veronika Rovná^{1 2}**

Mícha **Josef Škarka¹ / Petr Urbánek²**

Háta, his wife **Jana Hrochová² / Dominika Škrabalová¹ / Václava Krejčí Housková**

Vašek, son **Václav Čížek^{1 2} / Ondřej Koplík**

Jeník, Mícha's son from first marriage **Philippe Castagner / Martin Šrejma^{1 2} / Aleš Briscein**

Kecal **Martin Gurbal² / František Zahradníček¹**

Principal of comedians **Václav Morys / Peter Svetlák^{1 2}**

Esmeralda, comedian **Veronika Kaiserová / Karolína Levková^{1 2} / Lenka Pavlovič**

Indian, komediant **Erik Ondruš / Roman Vlkovič^{1 2}**

¹ cast of the March edition of the Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024

² cast of the May edition of the Smetana Opera Cycle Ostrava 2024

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OSTRAVA!!!